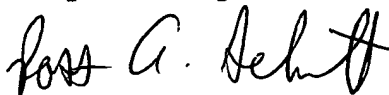


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REMARKS

The specification has been amended to identify eight U.S. Patent applications to which the subject matter of the present application may be related. These applications are being brought to the attention of the Examiner, pursuant to MPEP § 2004, paragraph 9. However, the citation of these applications should not be construed as an admission that the disclosures of these applications are related to the patentability of the present application. The Applicant submits that no new matter is introduced by this preliminary amendment, and, therefore, the amendment may be properly entered.

Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to the "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450", on December 4, 2003 by Alexis Karriker.

